

SOME GOLDEN DAYBREAK

17 Sermons on the Second Coming of CHRIST

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

This Present Age

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

AGES PAST, a present age, and future ages are clearly referred to in the Bible. An age is a period of time that has a definite beginning and a definite end.

CHRIST gave His promise to be with His followers to the consummation of the age. The King James version reads, world," and the word also means "**age**." In a number of places we have the word "**world**", the word "**age**" is in view.

We are now living in an age or dispensation that had a definite beginning and will have a definite ending. This age began with the coming of the Lord JESUS to this earth to die. This age will end with the coming of CHRIST to reign as KING of kings and LORD of lords.

I want to call to your attention some Bible teachings about this present age.

I. The Characteristics of This Age

The Bible clearly says that this is an evil age. There is no suggestion in the Word of GOD that this age will become better as it continues. The age is evil and will become more evil as it progresses toward the end.

First, this evil age is dominated by the Devil. He is spoken of as '**the god of this age**.' As long as the Devil remains, this age will continue to wax worse and worse.

Men will take sides against CHRIST and with Satan. He hates GOD and hates CHRIST, and will do all he can to defeat the work of GOD. Therefore, this age will be evil as long as the Devil remains. But, thank GOD, one day CHRIST is coming and the Devil will be chained for a thousand years and will finally be cast into the lake of fire.

Second, this is the age of the HOLY SPIRIT. The HOLY SPIRIT has always been present on the earth to move men to operate through them, but now in this age He is abiding in believers. Jesus gave this promise:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16, 17).

The HOLY SPIRIT dwells in believers to empower and to energize. He is here to administer the work of the churches. He was the One who called out Barnabas and Saul for the work of missions and sent them forth.

The HOLY SPIRIT is here to convict of sin. There is no salvation without conviction. This is the work of the HOLY SPIRIT to make men see their lost condition and to point them to the Lamb of GOD.

Third, this is an age of separation. Christians are to be separated from the world. We are not to be conformed to this age, but we are to be transformed. JESUS CHRIST **"gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of GOD and our Father."**

This age is to be definitely characterized by the separation of the people called Christians from the things of this world.

"Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

We are in this world, but we are not to be of the world. We have been chosen out of the world.

A fourth characteristic of this age is the grace of God. This is the age of grace. Grace is unmerited favor of God. CHRIST commands us to go abroad and tell men of the love of GOD and His willingness to save all who will come unto Him.

We need to remember that this age will not last forever. It had a definite beginning, and it has a definite ending; therefore, we must hasten with the good news of GOD's grace.

II. The Purpose of This Age

The purpose of this age is **'the calling out of a people for his name.'** Listen to the clear message of James to the church council in Jerusalem:

"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:13-17).

There were four points to James message.

- First, God is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.
- Second, the return of the Lord. **"After this I will return."**
- Third, the restoration of Israel. **"I will build again the tabernacle of David."**
- Fourth, the millennium: **"That the residue of men might seek after the Lord."**

The purpose of GOD is to take out a people for His name and to make them ready for the great things which are to take place. The purpose of GOD is not to convert the world. This world will not be won to CHRIST in this age. The purpose of GOD is not the establishment of a new world order. This will come in the age which follows ours. The purpose of GOD for this age is not to bring universal peace to nations. Peace is also promised in the Word of GOD, but it belongs to the time when CHRIST shall reign upon the earth. In this age of trouble, heartache, and evil, GOD is offering to man the highest and best that He has. He is offering salvation through the blood of His Son. The HOLY SPIRIT is working to produce conviction and to point men to the Saviour. Here and there are those who hear and heed. These are the called-out ones and they will live and reign with CHRIST.

III. The End of This Age

The Word tells us that certain things will happen in the last days of this age. JESUS gave a full discourse on this matter in answer to the question of His disciples, when they asked, **"And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"**

He said that wars would characterize this entire age and would continue down to the end of the age. **"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places"** (Matthew 24:6, 7).

CHRIST said that wars would continue. Put this truth of our LORD over against the modern conception of trying to stop war through alliances and combinations of nations. Wars will continue and will finally go into the Great Tribulation period and will climax in the battle of Armageddon. This present age faces a complete collapse, and every word of the Lord JESUS will be fulfilled.

In the end of this age there will be a departing from the faith.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1).

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Timothy 3:1-5).

Listen to these words:

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables[/b]" (II Timothy 4:3, 4).

The day will come, Paul said, when professing Christians will reject doctrinal preaching. Christians will seek teachers who will please them. They will be turned from the truth and will be turned to fables. I leave it with you whether or not we have come to this day.

Scoffers will be a sign of the end of the age.

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Peter 3:3,4).

This day is certainly upon us. The matter of the second coming of our LORD has become an issue. Some are openly scoffing and fighting the doctrine. Others are trying to solve the problem by saying that they believe in the coming of CHRIST, but not in the imminent, premillennial return of CHRIST.

Finally, I find another sign of the end of the age. It is given to us in James 5, verses 1 to 8:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupt, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered in the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Here is a picture of the conflict between capital and labor. We know that such a conflict has been going on and continues to become more intense. I have no comment to make save that this is one of the signs of the end of this age.

We have talked about some very serious matters tonight - matters that should cause all of us to think seriously. We have been seeing GOD's picture of this day in which we live. It is not beautiful, but it all points to a glorious event - the coming of JESUS and our removal to be with Him. As the world rushes on in its evil course, we are looking for the return of CHRIST. We are waiting for the fulfillment of prophecies regarding His coming, and the Golden Age.

The Bible has good news for every lost person. It is the news of salvation through JESUS CHRIST. Hasten to receive CHRIST as your Saviour that you might be ready for His coming and for the new age which He will begin. A beautiful picture of how it should be when JESUS comes is given in Luke 8:40, "**And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.**"

This verse does not refer to the Second Coming, but it certainly should be a picture of our attitude.

~ end of chapter 16 ~
